



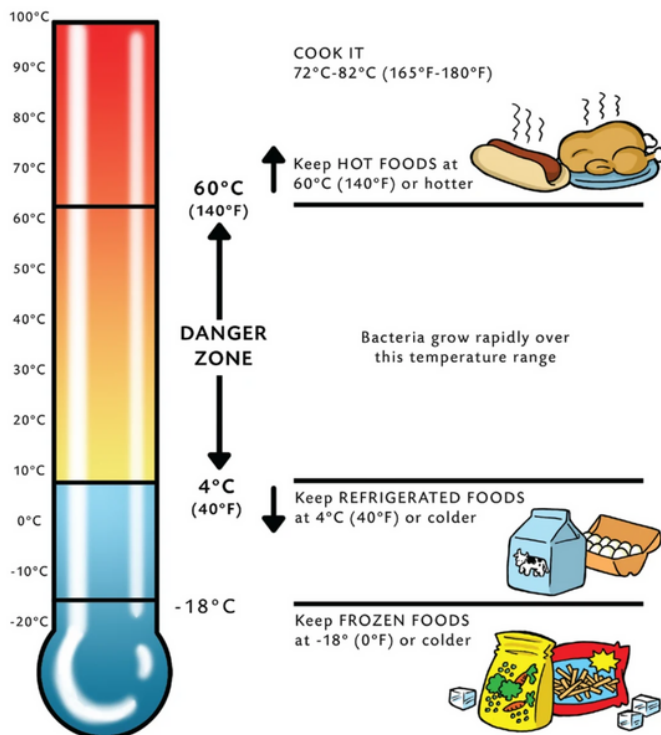
# APRIL 2021

## FOOD SAFETY, PREP AND STORAGE

Here we are again in another lockdown. With COVID cases on the rise for the spring season, we all need to do our part to keep ourselves safe and that includes food safety. Food safety education helps prevent foodborne illnesses which results when harmful bacteria, viruses, parasites or chemical substances are transmitted to people from food. Along with washing your hands and fresh produce, sanitizing surfaces and avoiding cross-contamination of raw and read-to-eat/cooked foods, here are other food safety tips:

### THE DANGER ZONE

The **DANGER ZONE** is when food temperatures are between 4° and 60°C (40° and 140°F). Food should never be kept between these temperatures for more than 2 hours.



### GROCERY SHOPPING

Food safety starts at the grocery store. When you go grocery shopping, start with the shelf-stable items first then move around the outside aisles, starting with the fruits and vegetables. The last items to pick up should be refrigerated and frozen items like milk products, frozen foods, fresh meat and hot deli. This way cold foods stay cold and hot foods stay hot while you travel.

- ★ Place meat and poultry in plastic bags to prevent juices from dripping onto fresh food.
- ★ Plan ahead and bring an iced cooler if you are not going straight home from the grocery

# REFRIGERATOR

You should keep a thermometer in your fridge to maintain and keep track of the internal temperature at 4°C (39°F). The coldness slows down bacteria growth, it doesn't kill them, so keep in mind that over time your fresh foods will still begin to spoil.

- ★ Butter and eggs should be stored in their own containers inside the fridge where it's the coldest, not on the inside door.
- ★ Clean your fridge drawers monthly with a clean sponge and mild dish detergent mixed with warm water. If there is an odour, wash with 1-2 tbsp baking soda mixed with 4 cups warm water.

# FRESH PRODUCE

**FRUITS:** Fruits can be stored at room temperature. After they've started to ripen they will begin to spoil and mold quickly so if you don't use it right away, put the ripe fruits in the fridge. Fresh fruit can also be stored in the freezer for 6-12 months.

- ★ The best way to freeze fruit is to cut and peel (if necessary), place individual pieces on a baking sheet and freeze. Then store frozen piece in a plastic freezer bag or container to prevent clumping together when they freeze.

**VEGETABLES:** Root vegetables should be stored in a cool, dry place while other vegetables should be refrigerated or frozen.

- ★ Apples, tomatoes and bananas give off ethylene gas which makes food ripen faster. Store these fruits separate from other fruits to avoid ripening quickly, or store them in a paper bag with a fruit you want to ripen quickly.



# MEATS

If you don't plan to use right away, it's best to freeze meat, fish and poultry after buying. If you store it in the fridge, keep it in its original packaging and place on trays at the bottom of the fridge to prevent raw meat juices from coming in contact with fresh foods.

# MILK PRODUCTS

These items should be stored in the coldest part of the fridge, not the refrigerator door. You can also freeze butter, cheese and cream, keep in mind that the quality of the items may be different once thawed (e.g. hard cheeses are very crumbly after frozen and thawed) but are still okay to cook with.

# FREEZER

You should keep a thermometer in your freezer to maintain and keep track of the internal temperatures below -18°C (0°F). To defrost frozen food, thaw in the refrigerator over night, in the microwave or in the sink under cold running water if cooking food right away. Do not re-freeze thawed food.

# MEAL PREPPING

**VEGGIES:** When you bring vegetables home, cut them up and store them in containers as soon as possible. This way they become easier to add to meals without forgetting about them. E.g. add chopped peppers or onions to stir-fry, omelettes, soups, pasta sauces, salads, quiche, pizza, etc. You can freeze chopped veggies in plastic freezer bags to last longer.

★ Portion chopped veggies into small Ziploc/freezer bags and lay them flat in the freezer to optimize space and make it easier to grab and thaw when you need them.

**PROTEIN:** If you're making a meal with meat, cook extras to add to other meals later on. Try rotisserie chicken from the grocery store, it is great if you don't want to spend time marinating and baking. You can add it to various meals like chicken salad sandwich, wraps, soups, or rice. Beans, peas and lentils are also versatile and can be quickly prepared by buying canned, rinsing thoroughly, then refrigerate in a container; you can add these to meals for a protein and fibre boost or as a snack.

★ Make a bunch of hard-boiled eggs and keep in the fridge for up to 7 days. Then add them to breakfasts, snacks or any meal (e.g. potato salad, cobb salad, Buddha bowls, soup) for a protein boost.

**CARBS:** Carbohydrates are important for muscles, energy and preventing sugar cravings. Prepare 1-2 grains or starches in advance like brown rice, quinoa, bulgur, couscous, sweet potato or other potatoes then add them to salads or the base for curry or Buddha bowls.

★ You can buy whole grain mixes to add variety to your meals, and they cook in less than 10 minutes which is a great time saver!

If you're already meal prepping, that's great! But how long should you keep that prepared food? Most meal prep meals will last 3-5 days in the fridge. Duration of frozen leftovers depend on components.

Check out the next page for a storage guideline handout that you can print and store in your kitchen.



## STORING FOOD

**MATERIAL:** Choose containers that are made from glass, silicone, metal, bamboo or plastic. If using plastic, ensure they are BPA-free. Also check that they are oven-proof, microwave safe and freezer-friendly, depending on what you're going to use them for. Avoid reheating in plastic bags to prevent plastic from leaching.

**LEAK-PROOF:** Look for containers with lids with a silicone seal for extra tightness. Air-tight containers will allow your food to stay fresh longer.

**VERSITILITY:** Choose containers that are fit for your meal preferences; add variety to your meals by including multiple compartment and single compartment containers.

## CUPBOARD (ROOM TEMPERATURE)

Unless otherwise specified, times apply to unopened packages.

### CEREAL GRAINS

(once opened, store in airtight containers, away from light and heat)

Bread crumbs (dry)	3 months
Cereals (ready-to-eat)	8 months
Cornmeal	6–8 months
Crackers	6 months
Pasta	several years
Rice	several years
Rolled oats	6–10 months
White flour	1 year
Whole wheat flour	3 months

### CANNED FOODS

(once opened, store covered in refrigerator)

Evaporated milk	9–12 months
Other canned foods	1 year

### DRY FOODS

(once opened, store in airtight containers, away from light and heat)

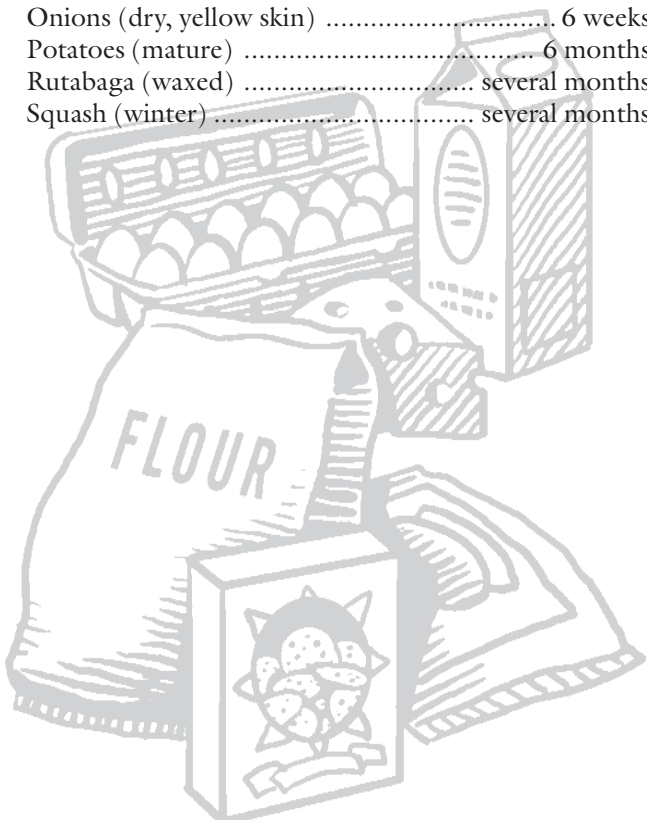
Baking powder, baking soda	1 year
Beans, peas, lentils	1 year
Chocolate (baking)	7 months
Cocoa	10–12 months
Coffee (ground)	1 month
Coffee (instant)	1 year
Coffee whitener	6 months
Fruit (dried)	1 year
Gelatin	1 year
Jelly powder	2 years
Mixes (cake, pancake, tea biscuit)	1 year
Mixes (pie filling and pudding)	18 months
Mixes (main dish accompaniments)	9–12 months
Potatoes (flakes)	1 year
Skim milk powder – unopened	1 year
– opened	1 month
Sugar (all types)	several years
Tea bags	1 year

### MISCELLANEOUS FOODS

Honey	18 months
Jam, jellies (once opened, store covered in refrigerator)	1 year
Mayonnaise, salad dressings – unopened	6 months
– opened (store covered in refrigerator)	1–2 months
Molasses	2 years
Nuts	1 month
Peanut butter – unopened	6 months
– opened	2 months
Pectin – liquid	1 year
– opened (store covered in refrigerator)	1 month
– powdered	2 years
Sandwich spread (once opened store covered in refrigerator)	8 months
Syrups — corn, maple, table	1 year
Vegetable oils (once opened, store covered in refrigerator)	1 year
Vinegar	several years
Yeast (dry)	1 year

### VEGETABLES

Potatoes, rutabaga, squash	1 week
Tomatoes	1 week
<b>Cool room (7–10°C, 45–50°F)</b>	
Onions (dry, yellow skin)	6 weeks
Potatoes (mature)	6 months
Rutabaga (waxed)	several months
Squash (winter)	several months



# Food Handlers' Storage Guide

General guidelines for the shelf life of common foods. Read the label and check “best before” dates if applicable. Most foods are safe to eat if stored longer, but flavour and nutritional value will deteriorate. Discard if there is evidence of spoilage.



## FREEZER (-18°C, 0°F)

Use freezer wrapping or airtight containers. Freeze fresh food at its peak condition.

### DAIRY PRODUCTS AND FATS

Butter – salted	1 year
– unsalted	3 months
Cheese – firm, processed	3 months
Cream – table, whipping (separates when thawed)	1 month
Ice cream	1 month
Margarine	6 months
Milk	6 weeks
Soy milk (separates when thawed)	6 weeks
Lactose-free milk	3 weeks

### FISH AND SHELLFISH

Fish (fat species: lake trout, mackerel, salmon)	2 months
Fish (lean species: cod, haddock, pike, smelt)	6 months
Shellfish	2–4 months

### FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

1 year

### MEAT, POULTRY AND EGGS

#### Uncooked

Beef (roasts, steaks)	10–12 months
Chicken, turkey – cut up	6 months
– whole	1 year
Cured or smoked meat	1–2 months
Duck, goose	3 months
Eggs (whites, yolks)	4 months
Ground meat	2–3 months
Lamb (chops, roasts)	8–12 months
Pork (chops, roasts)	8–12 months
Sausages, wieners	2–3 months
Variety meats, giblets	3–4 months
Veal (chops, roasts)	8–12 months

#### Cooked

All meat	2–3 months
All poultry	1–3 months
Casseroles, meat pies	3 months

### MISCELLANEOUS FOODS

Bean, lentil or pea casseroles	3–6 months
Breads (baked or unbaked, yeast)	1 month
Cakes, cookies (baked)	4 months
Herbs	1 year
Pastries, quick break (baked)	1 month
Pastry crust (unbaked)	2 months
Pie (fruit, unbaked)	6 months
Sandwiches	6 weeks
Soups (stocks, cream)	4 months
Tofu (non-silken)	5 months

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Published by Ministry of Agriculture and Food  
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RV 02-03-10M AF106

## REFRIGERATOR (4°C, 40°F)

Unless otherwise indicated, cover all foods.

### DAIRY PRODUCTS AND EGGS

(check “best before” dates)

Butter – unopened	8 weeks
– opened	3 weeks
Cheese – cottage (once opened)	3 days
– firm	several months
– processed (unopened)	several months
– processed (opened)	3–4 weeks
Eggs	3 weeks
Margarine – unopened	8 months
– opened	1 month
Milk, cream, yogurt – once opened	3 days
Soy milk – once opened	5 days
Lactose-free milk – unopened	18–22 days
– opened	5–6 days
Tofu – once opened (store in water)	5–7 days

### FISH AND SHELLFISH

Clams, crab, lobster, mussels (live)	12–24 hours
Fish (cleaned) – raw	3–4 days
– cooked	1–2 days
Oysters (live)	24 hours
Scallops, shrimp (raw)	1–2 days
Shellfish (cooked)	1–2 days

### FRESH FRUIT (RIPE)

Apples	2 months
– purchased February to July	2 weeks
Apricots (store uncovered)	1 week
Blueberries (store uncovered)	1 week
Cherries	3 days
Cranberries (store uncovered)	1 week
Grapes	5 days
Peaches (store uncovered)	1 week
Pears (store uncovered)	1 week
Plums	5 days
Raspberries (store uncovered)	2 days
Rhubarb	1 week
Strawberries (store uncovered)	2 days

### FRESH VEGETABLES

Asparagus	5 days
Beans (green, wax)	5 days
Beets	3–4 weeks
Broccoli	3 days
Brussels sprouts	1 week
Cabbage	2 weeks
Carrots	several weeks
Cauliflower	10 days
Celery	2 weeks
Corn	use same day
Cucumbers	1 week
Lettuce	1 week
Mushrooms	5 days
Onions (green)	1 week
Parsnips	several weeks
Peas	use same day
Peppers (green, red)	1 week
Potatoes (new)	1 week
Spinach	2 days
Sprouts	2 days
Squash (summer)	1 week

### MEAT, POULTRY

#### Uncooked

Chops, steaks	2–3 days
Cured or smoked meat	6–7 days
Ground meat	1–2 days
Poultry	2–3 days
Roasts	3–4 days
Variety meats, giblets	1–2 days

#### Cooked

All meats and poultry	3–4 days
Casseroles, meat pies, meat sauces	2–3 days
Soups	2–3 days

### MISCELLANEOUS FOODS

Coffee (ground)	2 months
Nuts	4 months
Shortening	1 year
Whole wheat flour	3 months





# GARDEN VEGGIE BUDDHA BOWL WITH LENTILS AND TAHINI DRESSING

## INGREDIENTS

### Tahini Dressing

- 3 tbsp tahini (sesame paste)
- 3 tbsp rice vinegar
- 1 tsp grated ginger
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 3 tbsp canola oil
- 3 tbsp boiling water
- salt and pepper to taste

### Bowl base

- 2 cups cooked brown rice
- 1 cup cooked black or green lentils
- 3 tbsp chopped dill
- 2 cups thinly sliced baby spinach
- 1 cup thinly sliced red peppers
- 1 cup graded carrots
- 1 cup enoki or other mushrooms sliced
- 1/2 cup pumpkin seeds
- salt and pepper to taste

## PROCEDURE

- 1 Cook brown rice and lentils as per package directions.
- 2 Dressing: whisk tahini, vinegar, ginger, garlic and canola oil together until smooth. Add boiling water to thin out. Season with salt and pepper. Set aside.
- 3 Toss hot rice and lentils with dill in a bowl, season with salt and pepper. Divide into serving bowls or containers for meal prep.
- 4 Divide spinach, peppers, carrots, mushrooms and pumpkin seeds on top of rice blend.
- 5 Drizzle dressing on top of veggies. If meal prepping, add dressing to small containers to drizzle on before eating.

## TIPS

To save time, you can try PC Blue Menu Whole Grain Brown Rice with Lentils and Quinoa Blend that's ready in 3.5 minutes! Recipe adapted from Cookspiration.com

## PREP TIME

Prep 10 m | Cook 45 m

Makes 6 servings

## NUTRITION INFORMATION

*Per 1 serving (1 cup salad, 2 tbsp dressing)*

**Calories** 340

**Fat** 17 g

**Saturated** 2 g

**Sodium** 220 mg

**Potassium** 448 mg

**Carbohydrates** 35 g

**Fiber** 9 g

**Sugars** 4 g

**Protein** 13 g

**Vitamin A** 34%

**Calcium** 2.7%

**Vitamin C** 57.8%

**Iron** 22%